

## Collecting and Preserving Insects

**Collecting:** Most adult flying insects are generally collected using a fine net. Individual insects can be collected with forceps by searching on plants, under logs and rocks and among weeds.

**Killing:** Most entomologists use "killing jars" to kill the insects they have collected. A simple version of this is essentially a wide mouthed jar with a small open vial containing cotton attached to the lid. The cotton is saturated with ethyl acetate or carbon tetrachloride or ether before each use. Specimens should be removed from killing jars as soon as possible and never more than a few hours. Alternately, insects can be placed in vials or jars and placed in the freezer for several days. This will kill most insects although a few may revive when thawed.

**Mounting and Preserving:** Most insects, unless very small or fleshy larvae, are best preserved by pinning and drying. Use only specially made insect pins to mount insects and pay attention to the location of the pin through the animal. Butterflies, moths and dragonflies will need to be spread on a pinning board to arrange their wings and legs and antennae. Very small insects may need to be attached with glue or nail polish to small triangles of stiff paper which are then inserted onto insect pins. If you are making a collection of insects you must keep them in an insect proof box or tray. It is a good idea to place a moth ball or paradichlorobenzene crystals in the box to prevent destruction by insects.